



ANNUAL REPORT on the [Workforce Investment Act](#)
State of Arkansas ♦ Program Year 2011



Submitted to the
U.S. Department of Labor

Prepared by the
Arkansas Department
of Workforce Services

October 1, 2012



Report Prepared by

Office of Employment Assistance
Arkansas Department of Workforce Services
P.O. Box 2981
Little Rock, Arkansas 72203

www.dws.arkansas.gov

Arkansas Workforce Investment Board Members

Governor Mike Beebe	Dwayne Mays, Strategic Planning Committee Chair
Diane Hilburn, Chair	Representative Walls McCrary
Tom Anderson, Vice-Chair	Steve McGuire
Sarah Agee, Governor's Liaison	Ken Milbrodt
John Adams	Katy Morris
Terrie Baker	Representative Jim Nickels
Lawrence Bearden	Mary Parham
Ricky Belk	Mike Rebick
Shane Broadway	Marty Reep
Karen Coy	Gary Sams
Bob East	John Selig
Donnie Fowler	Mayor Mark Stodola
Judge Jimmy Hart	Hays Sullivan
Randy Haynie	Pat Sweeden
Barbara Horn	Grant Tennille
Alan Hughes	Maria Touchstone
Dean Inman	Robert Trevino, Program Committee Chair
Brian Itzkowitz	Bill Walker
Sandra Kerr	Artee Williams
Senator Randy Lavery	Senator David Wyatt
Marion Littlejohn	

VISION

A highly trained and diversified workforce that meets the needs of high growth industry, which drives a statewide regionalized economy that is competitive in the global market.

MISSION

The Arkansas Workforce Investment Board will strive to ensure an innovative and demand-driven workforce investment system, in collaboration with education, business, industry, labor and state agencies, that effectively leverages employment and training resources and collectively responds to the needs of local and regional economies.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	1
Workforce Development System Vision & Goals	1
State Approved Waivers	1
Workforce System Evaluation	2
State Workforce Board Strategic Planning	3
Dislocated Worker Services	4
Career Readiness Certificate Update	5
National Emergency Grants	5
Arkansas Energy Sector Partnership	6
Hiring Mature Worker Awards	7
Outreach to Communities	8
Arkansas Workforce Centers Career Expo	9
Disability Programs	9
Reemployment Assistance to Unemployment Insurance Claimants	10
Veterans Services	11
Arkansas Partnership for Nursing's Future	12
Partnership with Registered Apprenticeship	12
Arkansas Workforce Center Transitions	13
Business Engagement	14
Mobile Workforce Centers	14
Performance	15
Local Area Highlights	21
Success Stories	31

INTRODUCTION

The federal Workforce Investment Act (WIA) was signed into law in August 1998 and became effective in Arkansas on July 1, 2000. This summary report focuses on twelfth year accomplishments in Arkansas relative to the provision of WIA Title I-B services. For Program Year 2011 (July 2011 through June 2012), the United States Department of Labor (DOL) allotted approximately \$19.7 million in WIA Title I-B funds to Arkansas. While these funds enabled a continuation of employment and training services designed to benefit our youth, adults and dislocated workers, as well as our employers, funding for PY 2011 was \$3.5 million less than the previous year's funding due primarily to funding reductions at the federal level.

This report describes how WIA Title I-B is organized in Arkansas, highlights state and local accomplishments, and concludes with WIA Titles I-B and III performance results.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM VISION AND GOALS

Arkansas's strategic plan for workforce development was extended for the Workforce Investment Act and Wagner-Peyser Act programs through September 15, 2012. The plan communicates the state's vision, goals, objectives and strategies for the workforce development system. WIA Title I-B programs are a critical part of realizing this vision and accomplishing our state's workforce development goals. In addition, the state received approval of an extension to the following waivers as well.

Waivers

[Waiver of the prohibition at CFR 664.510 on the use of Individual Training Accounts for older and out-of-school youth](#)

The ability to use Individual Training Accounts for this hard-to-serve population enhances the ability of local areas to expedite entry into the workforce through occupational skills training and eliminates the duplicative efforts inherent to dual-enrollment.

[Waiver to replace the performance measures at WIA Section 136 \(b\) with the common measures.](#)

The common measures provide a simplified and streamlined performance measurement system and have become the basis of the workforce system's performance accountability. This waiver positively impacts all customers of Arkansas' workforce investment system by simplifying program management and performance measurement.

[Waiver of the provision at 20 CFR 663.530 that prescribes a time limit on the period of initial eligibility for training providers.](#)

By alleviating provider concerns with the types and amount of information to be collected and reported, the state is able to retain approved providers and continues to increase their numbers. This facilitates quality customer choice for Arkansans in need of occupational skills training.

[Waiver of WIA Section 133 \(b\) \(4\) to increase the allowable transfer amount between Adult and Dislocated Worker funding streams allocated to a local area to fifty \(50\) percent.](#)

This waiver provides greater flexibility in the design of local area adult and dislocated worker service delivery plans and enhances the ability of local boards to respond to changing workforce and economic dynamics. Local boards are able to provide targeted assistance in response to customer needs. The vast majority of requests are to transfer dislocated worker funds to the adult funding stream because a large number of dislocated workers qualify for training under the Trade Adjustment Assistance program. The ability to transfer funds enables local areas to serve more

adults that were not trade impacted.

WORKFORCE SYSTEM EVALUATION

In February 2011, Kaiser Group, Inc. was hired by the Arkansas Workforce Investment Board and the Arkansas Department of Workforce Services to conduct an evaluation of the Workforce Investment System in Arkansas. The contract period was February 1, 2011 to June 30, 2011. The evaluation was designed to be a process review, not a data or compliance review. The focus of the evaluation was to highlight process improvement opportunities, review a sample of the Arkansas Workforce Centers (AWCs) against the State's certification criteria, and to create a framework for action for regional and state leaders.

The Kaiser Group evaluation team visited seven workforce regions in Arkansas and eighteen workforce centers (this was a mixture of comprehensive, satellite and affiliate centers).

At each site, interviews were arranged with all levels of staff from key partner agencies. Structured interview questions were used to explore progress in the regional Arkansas Workforce Centers toward service integration and collaboration between partners.

The focus was not a compliance review of each region, but a systems review of the value, quality improvement aspects and functional application of the criteria in the certification standards. The evaluation included a review of the business plan and an operational review with seven areas of focus. The seven areas were Organizational Structure, Service Integration and Collaboration, Customer Satisfaction, Performance Management, AWC Brand, Business Services/Services to Employers, and a checklist review of Facilities and Resource Rooms. A summary of the workforce system recommendations made by the evaluator includes:

Organizational Structure

- Update the Arkansas Workforce Center certification policy to focus on continuous improvement
- Define and strengthen the regional organizational structures
- Continue with regional and statewide workforce manager meetings and develop agendas that maximize "face time" and creates networking opportunities
- Strategic refocus of leadership on Arkansas Workforce Center system vision and operational priorities.

Service Integration

- Cross training needs to focus on key workforce center-wide processes
- Develop an acronym dictionary and place online to assist center staff in understanding terms
- Use the Line of Sight exercise as part of local planning efforts to develop an integration strategy that will improve outcomes
- Incentive funding should be tied to system benchmarks rather than program goals

Customer Service

- Develop a consistent approach to more formally and routinely collect, compile, and share customer satisfaction data

Performance Management

- Develop an Arkansas Workforce Center scorecard to track progress toward outcomes
- Develop a process for all workforce center staff to understand all performance goals of the other programs
- Renegotiate the WIA standards with U.S. Department of Labor - Arkansas's are among the highest in the nation
- Develop local service integration and collaboration benchmarks
- Consider moving the WIA monitoring unit in DWS

PY 2011 ANNUAL REPORT

to the program section and out of fiscal, or review other ways to improve the effectiveness of the process

Arkansas Workforce Center Brand

- Review all Center designations
- Build on the statewide marketing campaign and strengthen regional marketing of the AWC brand
- Explore website options that are consistent with the AWC brand identity

Business Services

- Business service teams need to be connected to regional economic development efforts
- Develop an employer-friendly website
- Increase staff awareness of sector strategies
- Better track and document Individual Training Accounts and subsidized employment to leverage customers into market demand areas

Customer Flow

- Establish one common focal point of entry in each Arkansas Workforce Center
- Focus on importance of receptionist function
- Establish and maintain a single resource room for use by customers of all programs
- Provide consistent training for resource room staff
- Explore more customer friendly options for Career Readiness Certification assessment

The final evaluation report can be found online at www.dws.arkansas.gov/AWIB/Information.htm and includes information on the evaluation methodology used, findings, promising practices, and recommendations.

In PY 2011, the state met with local workforce investment areas to discuss the findings, recommendations and challenges cited in the evaluation report and to identify areas for improvement within the workforce system. Two semi-annual meetings of workforce center managers from throughout the state

were held in September 2011 and March 2012, with approximately 150 in attendance at each meeting. The agendas for these meetings were built around topics that would address the evaluation recommendations, assist in streamlining services, and facilitate better partnerships.

Strategies were developed and included in the PY 12 integrated strategic plan submission to the U.S. DOL to address many of the evaluation recommendations.

STATE WORKFORCE BOARD STRATEGIC PLANNING

The Arkansas Workforce Investment Board concluded their strategic planning for PY 2012 through 2016 during PY 11.

Below is a summary of the objectives that were developed and were included in the state's integrated strategic plan submitted in September 2012 to the U.S. DOL.

Serve the range of job seekers

- Identify, provide and leverage services for adults, youth, dislocated workers, incumbent workers, people with disabilities, ex-offenders, mature workers, returning military, and other veterans

Serve the range of employers

- Develop and deliver services in support of small businesses, regional priority sectors, existing companies
- Understand industry skill needs locally, statewide and regionally
- Track business impact

Serve the range of job economies

- Address local businesses' skills needs
- Support skill development infrastructure
- Create industry skills task forces in each workforce

investment area

- Certify Arkansas communities as “career ready”

Ensure that the population is ready for work

Increase the effectiveness of local WIBs

Maintain collective accountability

Gain efficiencies across the system

- Create statewide workforce asset inventories
- Create joint diversified communication strategy
- Create joint tracking function across programs

Re-imagine learning

- Create mechanisms to integrate learning and work
- Improve remediation
- Provide new learning opportunities

Diversify funding

- Leverage new funding sources
- Explore cost sharing with job seekers, employers

DISLOCATED WORKER SERVICES

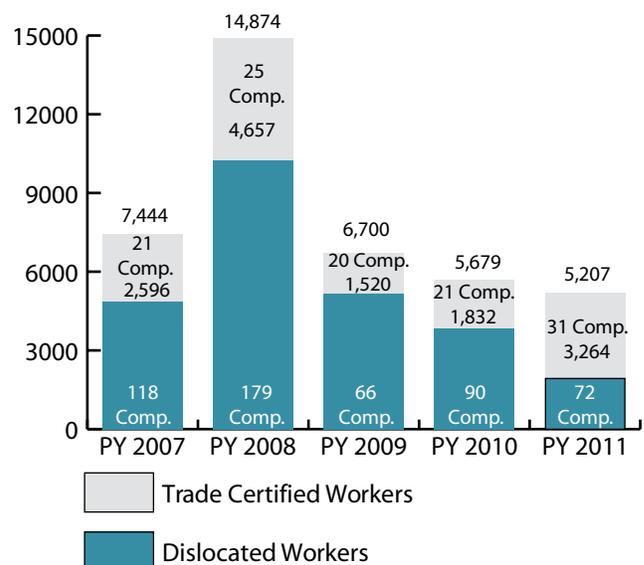
Arkansas continues to create economic growth through attracting new employers and by working to retain the businesses we already have. Unfortunately, some businesses must downsize or even close their doors, and their workers become displaced through no fault of their own. When this happens to our citizens, it is a terrible blow to the community and the families affected. The Governor’s Dislocated Worker Task Force provides rapid response services to workers affected by layoffs through worker assistance workshops that provide information and services dealing with many issues including:

- Claiming Unemployment Insurance
- Retraining and Educational Opportunities
- Social Service Programs

- Stress Management
- Credit Counseling
- Insurance Needs
- Job Search Tips

Immediately upon receiving notice of a permanent closure or a substantial layoff, the Task Force contacts company officials. Whenever possible, a community meeting is scheduled with elected officials and business leaders to assist in creating action plans to aid both the community and the affected dislocated workers. In Program Year 2011, the Governor’s Dislocated Worker Task Force was informed of 72 company closures or layoffs impacting 5,207 workers.

- 31 companies were certified as trade-affected representing 3,264 workers--an increase of 78 percent from PY 2010.
- 2,498 eligible workers enrolled in the Trade Program--an increase of 200 percent from PY 2010.
- 899 clients exited the Trade Program.
- 87 worker assistance workshops were held attended by 4,530 workers.
- The Task Force participated in or sponsored 41 job and opportunity fairs to connect dislocated workers with jobs and supportive services.



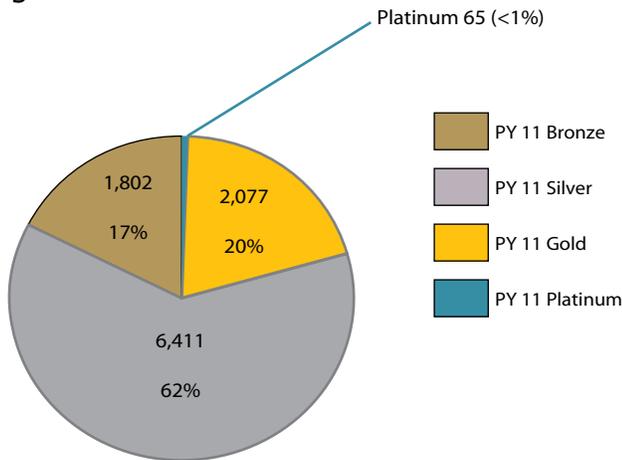
CAREER READINESS CERTIFICATION

In program year 2011, 10,355 career readiness certificates were awarded to Arkansas job seekers making the total number of CRC awards 40,437 since the inception of the program in 2008.

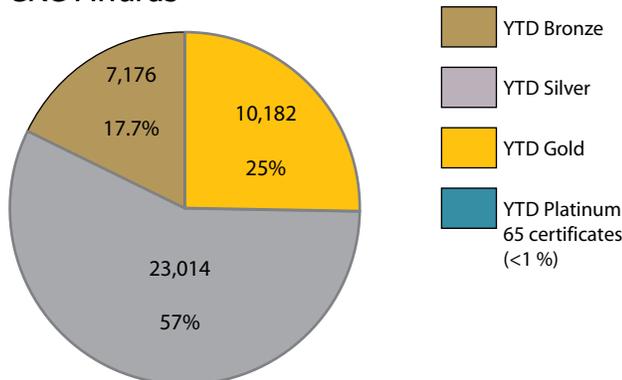
Seventy-one employers have signed commitment forms to use the Arkansas CRC program as part of their pre-employment process. More than 7,500 employers reported have reported wages for CRC holders throughout Arkansas.

Arkansas implemented the Platinum level certificate on January 1, 2012. To be eligible for a Platinum CRC a job seeker must score a 6 or higher on all three WorkKeys assessments (Reading for Information, Applied Mathematics and Locating Information).

Program Year 2011 CRC Awards



All CRC Awards



NATIONAL EMERGENCY GRANTS

In PY 2011, the state continued to administer two National Emergency Grants from previous years.

In 2011, in response to the severe storms, tornadoes and flooding, Arkansas applied for and received National Emergency Grant (NEG) funds to cover the cost of providing temporary employment linked to cleanup and recovery efforts caused by the disaster. Arkansas was awarded \$3,758,327 for the period of May 2, 2011 through June 30, 2012 to serve 350 participants. NEG funds received by the state were provided to eight (8) Local Workforce Investment Areas (LWIAs), geographically located throughout the state, through grant awards. The eight areas were Central, North Central, Northeast, Northwest, Southeast, Southwest, West Central and Western Arkansas. The Western Arkansas Planning and Development District (Central) was sub-granted \$150,456.00, White River Planning and Development District (North Central) was sub-granted \$518,399.00, Employment and Training Services, Inc. (Northeast) was sub-granted \$302,441.00, Northwest Arkansas Economic Development District, Inc. was sub-granted \$1,835,000.00, Southeast Arkansas Economic Development District, Inc. was sub-granted \$392,415.00, Western Arkansas Planning and Development District (Southwest) was sub-granted \$85,831.00, West Central Arkansas Planning and Development District, Inc. was granted \$149,331.00 and Western Arkansas Planning and Development District (Western) was sub-granted \$268,912.00. Due to FEMA announcing additional counties classified as 'Category A' (eligible to receive public



assistance), the state submitted a modification to add five counties which was approved on February 21, 2012. A third modification to extend the grant end period to June 30, 2012 and to distribute \$117,424.52 remaining funds from the West Central Arkansas Planning and Development District, Inc. was approved March 27, 2012. The Western Arkansas Planning and Development District (Central) was awarded \$19,570.00 for a total of \$170,026.00, White River Planning and Development District (North Central) was awarded \$19,571.52 for a total of \$537,970.52. The Northwest Arkansas Economic Development District, Inc. was awarded \$19,571.00 for a total of \$1,854,571.00. Southeast Arkansas Economic Development District, Inc. was awarded \$19,571.00 for a total of \$411,986.00. The Western Arkansas Planning and Development District (Southwest) was awarded \$19,570.00 for a total of \$105,402.00. West Central Arkansas Planning and Development District, Inc. revised total funding was \$31,906.48. Western Arkansas Planning and Development District (Western) was awarded \$19,571.00 for a total of \$288,483.00. There were 91 people that received permanent employment.

In response to the Storms December 2009, Arkansas applied for and received National Emergency Grant (NEG) funds to cover the cost of providing temporary employment linked to cleanup and recovery efforts caused by the disaster. Arkansas was awarded \$341,844.00 for the period of February 4, 2010 through March 31, 2012 to serve 29 participants. NEG funds received by the state were provided to two (2) Local Workforce Investment Areas (LWIAs), geographically located throughout the state, through grant awards. The two areas were Central and Southwest Arkansas. The Western Arkansas Planning and Development District (Central) was sub-granted \$239,480.00, and Western Arkansas Planning and Development District (Southwest) was sub-granted \$97,312.00. A modification to extend the grant end period to June

30, 2011 was approved December 14, 2010. A second modification to extend the grant period to December 31, 2011 was approved on June 15, 2011. A third modification was submitted to extend the grant period to March 31, 2012, but due to a lapse in federal appropriations, this grant was unilaterally modified to extend the period of performance from December 31, 2011 to January 31, 2012. The modification to extend the grant period to March 31, 2012 was approved on January 9, 2012. Arkansas enrolled 40 participants in the National Emergency Grant (NEG) AR-18 December Floods 2009 during the grant period. There were 16 people that received permanent employment as a result of participating in the NEG project.

ARKANSAS ENERGY SECTOR PARTNERSHIP

In January 2010, the U.S. Department of Labor awarded Arkansas an Energy Sector Partnership grant of \$4,866,479 from ARRA funds. The Arkansas Energy Sector Partnership (AESP) provides funding to enable Arkansas workers statewide to be trained in the skills required to succeed in energy efficient and green jobs. The AESP selected three areas of focus that will most likely result in job growth over the next few years. Those industries of focus are:

Energy Efficient Building, Construction, and Retrofitting;
Renewable Electric Power;
Energy Efficiency Assessment

AESP partnered with the state's two-year colleges as well as the Arkansas Apprenticeship Coalition to develop and deploy curriculum and programs that prepare participants for careers in the targeted industries. Training activities include high school concurrent credit programs, college certificate and degree programs, incumbent worker training, apprenticeship programs, workshops for employed workers to gain green skills, and training for disadvantaged populations.

Special efforts have been made to recruit participants from the priority populations of high school dropouts, offenders, unemployed workers, and other disadvantaged, at risk individuals. In addition, special efforts have been made to recruit individuals residing in the auto industry-impacted counties of Cleburne, Desha, Greene, and Logan Counties.

Key partners in implementing the AESP include the Arkansas Workforce Investment Board, the Arkansas Department of Workforce Services, the Arkansas Economic Development Commission Energy Office, the Arkansas Association of Two-Year Colleges, the Arkansas Apprenticeship Coalition, the Arkansas State Office of Apprenticeship, Winrock International, Arkansas Department of Career Education, nine regional partnership teams which include all ten local workforce investment boards, non-profits, and energy efficient and renewable energy industries.

PY 2011 AESP Grant Accomplishments:

- With a year remaining in the grant as of June 30, 2012, AESP has already achieved 122.3% of the entered training goal with 2,739 participants enrolled in AESP programs
- 1,303 AESP participants completed their training and entered employment or 85.6% of the program goal putting AESP on track to exceed that goal in the remainder of the grant period
- AESP has successfully recruited 1,283 members of priority populations to participate in trainings which is 427.7% of the original anticipated number of 300
- Many incumbent workers who participated in a training program experienced a wage increase of between 7% to 8% based on a study of a statistically significant random



- sampling of over 500 incumbent workers.
- 379 AESP participants have received supportive services which has enabled many participants to remain in training despite financial hardship
- Over 92 courses and 7 apprenticeship programs have incorporated energy efficiency curriculum that will be sustainable beyond the life of the grant
- Through community outreach and education programs, over 13,206 participated in energy efficiency programs
- Leveraged resources contributed by AESP partners in PY 2011 totals \$1,606,324.83

GOVERNOR'S WORK-LIFE BALANCE INITIATIVE AWARDS COMPANIES FOR HIRING MATURE WORKERS

For the fifth year in a row, the Arkansas Mature Worker Initiative, led by the Arkansas Department of Workforce Services and the Arkansas Workforce Investment Board, partnered with the Governor's Work-Life Balance Initiative to recognize three employers for their commitment to hiring and retaining mature workers (those age 50+).

The Mature Worker Friendly Awards were presented at the 10th Annual Work-Life Balance Awards ceremony May 8, 2012, at the Peabody Hotel. The Arkansas Educational Television Network (AETN), a three-time winner, was inducted as an ambassador. AETN joins Bank of the Ozarks, which was inducted as an ambassador in 2011. Liberty Bank and White County Medical Center (a two-time winner) were the other two winners.

The Arkansas Mature Worker Initiative was designed to increase the awareness of the need to hire and retain mature workers. The initiative also serves to connect mature workers to employers through the Arkansas Workforce Centers. It also stresses the importance

of keeping mature adults actively engaged in volunteer activities.

The Governor's Work-Life Balance Initiative recognizes Arkansas employers for establishing and providing resources that support employees in balancing the needs of both work and family.

OUTREACH TO COMMUNITIES

In PY 2011, the state coordinated or supported many events designed to assist dislocated workers, job seekers and the workforce development system. Several job and opportunity fairs were held for specific communities experiencing significant layoffs. An example of these opportunity fairs or other community outreach initiatives include:

- Assisting Southwest Workforce Area with CRC Testing for their Summer Youth in Desha/Chicot County and Bradley County.
- Hola Arkansas's (the publication) Career and Business Expo. Little Rock.
- Monticello Job Exposition.
- Career Opportunity / Job Fair Sponsored by the STAND FOUNDATION. Little Rock.
- Fort Smith Fall Opportunity Fair.
- 2011 Career Expo. North Little Rock.
- Welcome Home Event / Job Fair for returning military. Little Rock.
- Northwest Arkansas Job Fair. Rogers.
- 2nd Annual DWS Training Summit. Clear Channel Metroplex. Little Rock.
- Central Arkansas Human Resources Association Job Fair. Little Rock.
- Veteran's Reintegration event. Jonesboro.
- Martin Luther King Day Celebration. Little Rock.
- Arkansas Department of Career Education Conference. Eureka Springs.
- State-Wide Vets Training. Fayetteville, Hope, Jonesboro & Pine Bluff.
- Hope Migrant Farm Labor Center Open House.
- Sykes Company Job Fair. 600+ hiring initiative. Fort Smith.
- Arkansas Department of Career Education Conference. Eureka Springs.
- 2nd Annual Paragould Job Fair.
- U.S. Army Training exercise "All Services Challenge". Army OKC Recruiting Battalion. Rogers.
- Delta Technology Education Center Job Fair. Dumas.
- American Railcar Hiring Initiatives. Paragould, Marmaduke & Kennet, MO.
- Polk County Job Fair. 5/5/11. Mena.
- Arkansas Democrat / Central Arkansas Human Resource Association Job Fair. Little Rock.
- AR Health Dept. Community Health Fair (Linking the Community to Health Services). North Little Rock.
- Jacksonville, Chamber of Commerce Community Expo.
- Armed Forces Day. Jonesboro.
- Construction Career Day hosted by the Highway & Transportation Department. Little Rock.
- AR Dept. of Career Education, Community Forum Event. Fayetteville.
- NLR Neighborhood Works Week Celebrations. North Little Rock.
- ESGR/YRRP Employment Assistance Workshop for National Guard and reserve members. North Little Rock.
- Veteran's Reintegration Initiative. North Little Rock.
- Lakewood Middle School. Job Prep & Interviews. North Little Rock.
- WIA Summer Youth Program Orientation. Batesville.
- Mobile Unit deployed to Joplin, MO to assist with storm recovery.
- Southeast Arkansas Summer Youth Program. Lake

Village.

- Summer Unemployment Convention/Getting The Job Project. Pine Bluff.
- Town Hall Meeting: WIA Targeted Populations – Youth with Disabilities. Hot Springs.
- Commander’s Conference. Camp Robinson, North Little Rock.
- United National Foods, Inc. Job Fair. Harrison.
- Annual Health Fair/Community Clothing Drive Give-away. Little Rock.

ARKANSAS WORKFORCE CENTERS CAREER EXPO

For the third year, the Arkansas Workforce Centers held a Career Expo at Verizon Arena in North Little Rock on November 3, 2011. It was a huge success, with a turnout of more than 3,500 job seekers and 140 employers and educational providers.



In addition to visiting with employers, attendees received resume assistance, attended various workshops and received Arkansas Career Readiness Certificate assistance at the Mobile Resource Unit. A mini-Arkansas Workforce Center also was available. The center was equipped with computers, where job seekers could browse for jobs and prepare resumes.

New for 2011 was a Veterans Resource Center. Nine organizations that provide employment and training resources to veterans were on hand to assist veterans in their employment needs. More than 400 veterans were assisted during the one-day event.

DISABILITY PROGRAMS

In PY 2011, the state continued implementation of the Disability Employment Initiative (DEI) that works to prepare and connect youth with disabilities to career information and planning. The DEI project focuses on disabled youth ages 14-24.

The initiative provides Disability Resource Coordinators in Northwest, West Central, Southeast, and Eastern workforce areas and a project coordinator that works with the Arkansas Employment Network, a partnership with the U.S. Social Security Agency (SSA) to aid workforce center customers who receive Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) or Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits.

The initiative has three strategies to assist job seekers with disabilities to navigate and use the workforce center system. They are:

1. Guideposts for Success – to help youth with disabilities successfully transition into adulthood through milestone directives;
2. Integrated Resource Teams – representatives from different agencies and service organizations coordinate services and leverage funding to meet educational and employment needs;
3. Customized Employment – a relationship between an employer and an employee that is negotiated and personalized in a way that meets the needs of both.

PY 2011 DEI Grant Accomplishments:

- Catalogued and “mapped” the resources and organizations that serve youth with disabilities in their respective workforce areas.
- Visited many of the schools in their target areas. To

assist with and add constancy to outreach efforts, a “school-visit protocol” and booklet, DEI Rapid Guide to Youth Services, have been developed.

- Collaborated with other youth-serving advocates to re-organize and write the by-laws of the Arkansas Transition Council.
- Provided Disability Etiquette training to the senior-level managers and supervisors of workforce centers and has developed a schedule to provide similar training for “front-line” staff
- Participated and contributed to the Governor’s Employment First Taskforce, which was charged with increasing employment of persons with disabilities.
- Planned and implemented a meeting of workforce center managers and supervisors to provide information on the Governor’s Employment First Taskforce with strong participation from Arkansas Rehabilitative Services, Department of Education, and Division of Services for the Blind. Each local workforce area came away with an action plan for improving services to the disabled population being served in their community.
- Participated in multiple transition fairs and had a role in planning a five (5) county Transitions Fair that included over 15 schools, which to date was the largest fair in the state.
- Participated in multiple Arkansas educators conventions.
- Worked with veterans’ representatives to market the services that workforce centers provide for veterans with disabilities.
- Assisted the Arkansas Division of Services for the Blind with the placement of assistive technology kiosks at seven workforce centers.

REEMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE TO UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE CLAIMANTS

The Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2012, mandated four additional requirements for

current Unemployment Insurance claimants to continue to qualify for Emergency Unemployment Compensation (EUC) and assist them in returning to the workforce more quickly.

1. Orientation to the Workforce Center: a summary of the services provided by partners in the one-stop.
2. Dissemination of Labor Market information: An overview of the labor market in Arkansas and how data collected and created can be used to explore career options.
3. Assessment of Skills: An assessment of an individual’s current skill level. Since implementation of the reemployment eligibility assessment program in March 2012, 11,288 skill assessments have been done in the TORQ system. TORQ is a web-based assessment system that assists in identifying a client’s key knowledge, skills and abilities, based on their previous work experience, then utilizes that information to rank alternate occupations based on the ability to easily move into that occupation. The system combines labor market information (median wage in the area for the suggested occupations); O-Net knowledge, skills and abilities; current job posting information (from Job Central, Simply Hired, Indeed and Arkansas Job Link) to provide the client relevant information to assist identifying a possible career change.
4. Review of Eligibility: Job search contacts for the initial claim must be reviewed for any potential issues with eligibility.

The above listed services are provided by a combination of Unemployment Insurance, Employment Services, Veterans’ Employment Representatives and Reemployment Services staff members.

VETERANS SERVICES

The state's commitment to serving our veteran population is strong. The primary means of fulfilling the needs of veteran jobseekers remains the force of the Local Veterans Employment Representatives and Disabled Outreach Program Specialists fielded through funds provided by the Jobs for Veterans State Grant. Through this grant, the state employs 21 full time equivalents across the state to educate employers and jobseekers of the services available to veterans and ensuring that workforce centers adhere to priority of service for veterans. The effectiveness of these efforts are measured as they are for other clients, by determining the entered employment rate and employment retention rate of those served. While the outcomes for veterans as a whole are not significantly different from all employment service clients, it should be noted that for veterans who have separated within the last three years, 85% have obtained employment, and more than 92% retained employment. These outcomes are significantly better than for the overall jobseekers we serve, and are a testament to the priority of service we provide to this cohort.

The state educates the local office staff on the myriad of tools specifically directed at providing customized assistance to veterans (i.e. My Next Move, Military Skills Translator, and VetCentral. Our success with the implementation of priority of service is evidenced by the fact that during PY-11 of the 16,833 "Covered Entrants" served 99% received a direct service.

With regard to the implementation the Gold Card initiative, the state has provided targeted training to office managers, veteran, and job service staff on the steps required to document and provide follow up contact with veterans that come through our offices for service. The effect of this effort is identified by the fact that 62% of all veteran clients served by our system received staff assisted services, compared to 51% of all clients. As stated earlier, success of this

effort is indicated by the high entered employment and employment retention rates among our recently separated veterans. With the announcement of the Veterans Retraining Assistance Program (VRAP) as part of the Veterans Opportunity to Work (VOW) Act, the state has provided information on all of these efforts to our staff and suggestions on ways in which they can be leveraged with other programs and funding sources to overcome barriers for veteran clients.

In addition to the above activities, the state funded the ARVETS Initiative in PY 11 that provides additional support to veterans and their families to connect with needed employment and training services. The activities for this project include:

- Meet with military branches to develop a complete list of transferable skills veterans may have gained through military service for the purpose of assessing viable civilian job opportunities
- Compile information relative to the current Arkansas job market to assist in veteran job placement
- Develop tools to educate employers on the benefits of employing veterans
- Create a case management level system to help veterans navigate through components of employability services and track success
- Serve as a referral source for existing state and federal programs that share the common goal of improving the quality of life for veterans through career development
- Support statewide events and organizations to identify those in the veteran population in need of assistance
- Structure outreach efforts to include units and drill weekends for statewide reservist branches
- Focus on the veteran support system, which includes spouses and/or children and partner with existing organizations within the state to service this particular population

ARKANSAS PARTNERSHIP FOR NURSING'S FUTURE

Arkansas received a \$4.8 million grant to train health care professionals in the state over the next four years. Arkansas was one of 43 grantees who received this funding under the H-1B Technical Skills Training Grants. The goal of the federal grant program is to reduce the number of H-1B visas for foreign workers by training and educating Americans to fill those jobs most in demand. The Arkansas Partnership for Nursing's Future (APNF) will provide funding to enable Arkansas workers statewide to be trained for careers in the nursing profession which include Certified Nursing Assistants, Licensed Practical Nurses, Associate Degree Nurses and Bachelor of Science Degree Nurses. APNF will enable the development and deployment of materials and programs that will be used by Arkansas' Nursing, LPN and CNA programs statewide. A total of 1500 participants will receive grant funded services. Of these participants, APNF has a goal of 960 participants completing their education and a goal of placing at least 691 participants into employment in related health care fields. APNF will train 168 CNA's, 200 LPN's, 300 ADN's and 100 BSN's during the life of the grant. DWS Labor Market Information indicates that the number of RNs will increase more than 27 percent in Arkansas by 2018. According to the health care industry, more than 1,500 qualified nursing applicants are turned away each year in Arkansas because of limited capacity. The grant intends to address that lack of capacity through the use of distance learning and increased clinical training opportunities.

PARTNERSHIP WITH REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP

The Arkansas workforce system has strengthened its partnership with Registered Apprenticeship in recent years, through collaboration with the Arkansas Apprenticeship Coalition to implement the Arkansas Energy Sector Partnership grant. Through this collaboration, the state now has a mobile training center which is operated by the Arkansas Apprenticeship Coalition to provide "green" skills education to apprentices statewide.

Through a financial commitment in PY 11 from the Department of Workforce Services Training Trust Fund, the Arkansas Apprenticeship Coalition will train 100 new apprentices in various career paths, including electrical, painting, pipefitting, plumbing, sheet metal work, and welding over a three to five year period depending on the length of time it takes to reach the Master or Journeyman level.

Additionally, the state is exploring ways to better connect veterans seeking employment with Apprenticeship opportunities.

ARKANSAS WORKFORCE CENTER TRANSITIONS

In program year 2011, Arkansas had 60 total Arkansas Workforce Centers, including 23 comprehensive, 15 satellite, and 22 affiliate centers. In program year 2011, three Arkansas Workforce Centers were moved to new locations, experienced improvements to their locations, or were established as new centers.

Helena, Arkansas



In April 2012, the Helena Employment Service and Unemployment Insurance Office, the Helena Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) office and the Marianna TANF office all moved from their former locations in Helena and Marianna to a new location at 819 Newman Avenue in Helena, AR. The former doctor office building was completely remodeled and now houses ES, UI and TANF in once location. The AR Human Development Corporation is also located in this new facility to provide services to migrant and seasonal farmworkers.

Blytheville, Arkansas

The Arkansas Workforce Center at Blytheville moved from a state-owned building in May 2011 to the Arkansas Northeastern College Campus at Burdette, AR. Plans have been made to occupy the former Mo-Ark building at the south end of the Arkansas Northeastern College campus in Blytheville, AR around the end of October 2012. Partners in the Blytheville location will include Workforce Investment Act, Unemployment Insurance, Employment Services, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families.

Hope, Arkansas



Due to the U.S. Department of Labor's decision to cease funding the Arkansas Migrant Center in Hope, Arkansas in 2014, the state has decided to repurpose the building as a workforce center by moving the Hope workforce center to the migrant center location. A contract for architectural design was initiated in PY 11 for the design of the new center.



The partners that will be located at the new location include: Workforce Investment Act, Unemployment Insurance, Employment Services, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, Arkansas Human Development Corporation, Arkansas Rehabilitation Services, Job Corps, Experience Works, and also on the campus will be the Hope Migrant Community Health Clinic, and the South Arkansas Migrant Education Cooperative. Mock drawings for the new facility to begin construction in 2013 are to the left.

BUSINESS ENGAGEMENT

Outreach to the employer community is critical for the Arkansas Workforce Centers in meeting the employment needs of the community. Each local workforce investment area conducts business engagement activities in a customized way in order to meet the needs of their employers. Below is a summary of some of the outreach activities and programs and strategies for serving the employer community in Arkansas.

- Statewide implementation of the Arkansas Career Readiness Certificate program at no cost to employers or job seekers.
- Coordinated outreach to employers among all partner programs through the use of Business Liaison Teams to prevent duplicate contact.
- Speaking with a common message for the center rather than program specific messages.
- Use of Business Service Coordinators to focus on services to the employer community.
- Communication, both verbal and written, with local community leaders. Community leaders and local businesses are provided with pamphlets, brochures, business cards, and other reading material that gives a brief description of services.
- Conduct job fairs, opportunity fairs, and career expos at no cost to employers and jobseekers.
- Conduct open houses for community members to learn more about the workforce centers.
- Make mobile workforce center units available to employers that are having mass hiring or training.
- Allow employers to recruit and conduct interviews onsite at workforce centers.
- Work closely with chambers of commerce, economic and community development organizations to establish strong working partnerships, attend and participate in after-hours business networking events.
- Educate employers about incentives for hiring targeted populations through the Work Opportunity Tax Credit program and Federal Bonding program.
- Follow up with employers about the quality, timeliness, and efficiency of services provided.
- Partners share information about job openings and use a common database to record job orders throughout the state.
- Join regional and state human resource associations.

MOBILE WORKFORCE CENTERS

The Department of Workforce Services operates six mobile Arkansas Workforce Center units. The units are used to assist with employment services at job fairs and other events and are also transported as needed to areas of worker dislocation. The units, which are in high demand around the state, are available to training providers, educational institutions, and other state and federal agencies.

For Arkansans who lack access to reliable transportation this is often the critical factor in obtaining and maintaining employment. With the use of the mobile workforce centers, many more Arkansans will have access to workforce services. Each mobile workforce

center contains 10 to 13 computer stations, Two units also include an interview room, interactive smartboard, sound system, and four units are handicapp accessible. These two units also are equipped with outside monitors that can display videos and presentations which can be directed to larger audiences.

In program year 2011, the mobile units were used at 108 events statewide to assist jobseekers and employers.



PERFORMANCE DATA

Wagner-Peyser Performance

Because of the economy, this has been a record year for serving job seekers. In excess of 258,000 individuals visited the state’s workforce centers for a wide variety of reasons: seeking employment, to develop a resume, apply for training funds, or secure labor market information. Of this number, 231,000 or 89 percent were unemployed.

Just over 225,000 received work information services and were registered with Arkansas JobLink, the state’s internet-based job matching system. Of that number, 134,000 or 60 percent received staff assisted services. During the year, there were 123,361 job openings posted in Arkansas JobLink with an average of approximately ten thousand jobs available each day.

Through our partnership with the National Labor Exchange and a proactive effort to include jobs from employers with established applicant tracking systems, 53 percent of the jobs in our system are received and automatically included in our system through “no touch” electronic information transfer. This leveraging of information frees up staff to provide services directly to jobseekers and saves thousands of man hours each year in reduced maintenance and updating of individual job orders carried in our system.

Wagner-Peyser Program Results

Performance Items	Negotiated	Actual
Entered Employment Rate	71.5	63.8
Employment Retention Rate	80.5	80.4
Average Earnings*	\$9,500	\$11,850

*Average Earnings measure represents two quarters of earnings.

Of the jobseekers who became employed and are tracked in Arkansas JobLink for federal performance measurements, slightly over eighty percent remained employed for at least six months.

Workforce Investment Act Title I-B Performance

The data tables included in this report represent Arkansas’s Title I-B performance measure results for Program Year 2011. Arkansas has the highest performance measure goals amongst all states in four categories (Adult Entered Employment, Adult Employment Retention, Dislocated Worker Employment Retention, and Youth Attainment of a Degree or Certificate). In addition, the state has the second highest goals in two other categories (Youth Placement in Employment or Education and Dislocated Worker Entered Employment Rate).

The results of Arkansas’s rigorous performance measures were calculated in varying timeframes, meaning every measure was not calculated within the same twelve-month time period. For example, Average Earnings and Retention Rates were measured by customers who exited between April 2010 through March 2011. Entered Employment Rates were measured by customers who exited between October 2010 through September 2011. The 12-month Retention Rates and 12-month Average Earnings Rates were calculated based on customers who exited between January 2010 and December 2010. The Participant Counts were calculated from July 2011 through June 2012.

A performance table is presented for each of the state’s ten local workforce investment areas. Each table contains a section that illustrates the performance successes and/or challenges of each local area. The results serve as an evaluation tool to indicate the overall success rate of the statewide Title I-B system.

Adult Program Results At-A-Glance

ETA-B

Performance Items	Negotiated	Actual	Numerator Denominator
Entered Employment Rate	91.0	89.6	552 616
Employment Retention Rate	92.0	94.0	1122 1193
Average Earnings*	\$12,530	\$13,079	\$12,411,711 949

Outcomes for Adult Special Populations

ETA-C

Performance Items	Public Assistance Services	Numerator Denominator	Veterans	Numerator Individuals		Older Numerator		
				Disabilities	Denom	Individuals	Denom	
Entered Employment Rate	87.7	329	86.4	38	75.0	6	100.0	5
		375		44		8		5
Employment Retention Rate	93.2	593	91.7	55	88.9	8	94.1	16
		636		60		9		17
Average Earnings*	\$11,998	\$5,866,974	\$13,315	\$532,598	\$9,201.00	\$73,604	\$10,140	\$111,535
		489		40		8		11

Other Outcome Information for the Adult Program

ETA-D

Performance Items	Individuals Received Training	Numerator Denominator	Individuals Core/Intensive Services	Numerator Denominator
Entered Employment Rate	90.8	495	80.3	57
		545		71
Employment Retention Rate	94.5	1,006	90.6	116
		1,065		128
Average Earnings*	\$13,580	\$11,691,991	\$8,179	\$719,720
		861		88

*Average Earnings measure represents two quarters of earnings.

Dislocated Worker Program Results At-A-Glance

				ETA-E
Performance Items	Negotiated	Actual	Numerator Denominator	
Entered Employment Rate	93.5	96.0	572	596
			583	600
Employment Retention Rate	95.5	97.2	\$7,014,828	500
Average Earnings*	\$13,200	\$14,030		

Outcomes for Dislocated Worker Special Populations

								ETA-F
Performance Items	Veterans	Num Individuals Denom	Disabilities	Num Denom	Older Individuals	Num Denom	Displaced Homemakers	Num Denom
Entered Employment Rate	100.0	46	87.5	7	93.0	40	75.0	3
				8		43		4
Employment Retention Rate	98.0	48	100.0	1	97.7	42	100.0	1
				1		43		1
Average Earnings*	\$14,144	\$594,047	\$21,537	\$25,137	\$12,433	\$410,273	\$4,181	\$4,181
		42		1		33		1

Other Outcome Information for the Dislocated Worker Program

					ETA-G
Performance Items	Individuals Received Training	Numerator Denominator	Individuals Core/Intensive Services	Numerator Denominator	
Entered Employment Rate	96.5	520	91.2	52	57
		539		56	57
Employment Retention Rate	97.1	527	98.2	56	57
		543		\$473,006	41
Average Earnings*	\$14,252	\$6,541,822	\$11,537		
		459			

*Average Earnings measure represents two quarters of earnings.

Youth (14 - 21) Program Results

ETA-H1

Performance Items	Negotiated	Actual	Numerator Denominator
Placement in Employment or Education	79.7	84.1	781 929
Attainment of Degree or Certificate	76.9	81.4	764 938
Literacy and Numeracy Gains	48.0	85.9	67 78

Other Reported Information

Program	12 Mo.		12 Mo.				Wages		ETA-L	
	Employ Retention	Num Denom	Earn Change	Numerator Denominator	Place. Nontrad	Num Denom	Unsub	Num Denom	Unsub Trng	Num Denom
Adults	88.9	1108 1246	\$8,353	\$8,870,913 1062	3.1	17 552	\$4,943	\$2,367,497 479	62.4	309 495
Dislocated Workers	92.9	547 589	128.8	\$7,079,347 \$5,495,216	3.5	20 572	\$5,984	\$3,039,906 508	62.3	324 520
Older Youth	83.6	133 159	\$4,796	\$589,963 123	0.9	1 110	\$2,609	\$237,386 91		

Participation Levels

ETA-M

Program	Total Participants Served	Total Exiters
Total Adults	171,569	156,923
Total Adults (self)	169,588	155,573
WIA Adults	170,849	156,385
WIA Dislocated Workers	724	541
Total Youth (14 - 21)	1,721	983
Younger Youth (14 - 18)	1,500	838
Older Youth (19 - 21)	221	145
Out-of-School Youth	261	174
In-School Youth	1,460	809

Cost of Program Activities

		ETA-N
Program Activity	Total Federal Spending	
Local Adults		\$6,351,752.69
Local Dislocated Workers		4,183,814.81
Local Youth		6,165,519.15
ARRA Adult		0.00
ARRA Dislocated Worker		0.00
ARRA Youth		0.00
ARRA Rapid Response		0.00
Rapid ResponseARRA Dislocated Worker		1,589,770.40
Statewide Required Activities		558,709.99
	Description	
	Statewide Youth Activities	2,500.00
	Capacity Building & Technical Assistance	25,532.78
Statewide	GAE Administration	\$2,110,061.96
Allowed	Outreach	586,174.41
Activities	ARVets Veterans Program	379,309.50

Total of All Federal Spending Above **\$21,953,145.69**

Arkansas has analyzed the cost of workforce activities for the program year using the “cost per participant” methodology used in previous years. The analysis indicates that the value of services has increased and that overall costs of providing services have declined, considering inflationary factors.

For Program Year 2011, Arkansas provided a cost efficient program that provided a wide variety of services meeting the needs of all stakeholders. Data for PY 2011 are shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1 - Cost Analysis

ETA-Figure 1

Target Populations	PY 2011 Expenditures*	PY 2011 Participants Receiving Services	Cost Per Service Provided
Adults			
Core	\$1,513,345.30	1,575	\$960.85
Intensive	\$2,078,712.99	3,406	\$610.31
Training	\$1,621,752.30	1,047	\$1,548.95
Dislocated Adults			
Core	\$1,188,971.66	742	\$1,602.39
Intensive	\$1,560,521.73	1,833	\$851.35
Training	\$658,911.67	541	\$1,217.95
Youth	\$5,144,860.31	10,172	\$505.79

*Expenditures were from all available funding periods and sources, i.e., PY 2010, and PY 2011 allotments. Expenditure period covers July 1, 2011 through June 30, 2012. Please note that the participants counts above may count one individual more than once, depending on the level and number of services received by the participant.

Customer Satisfaction

The state has an approved waiver to implement the common measures waiver and therefore, does not have established target goals for the two customer satisfaction measures for employers and jobseekers. However, the state did conduct the customer satisfaction surveys per ACSI guidelines provided by the U.S. DOL. The outcomes of those surveys are below.

Employers

Overall Satisfaction	77.7%
Total Survey Population	480
Response Rate	86%

Participants

Overall Satisfaction	79.1%
Total Survey Population	551
Response Rate	74.4%

CENTRAL ARKANSAS HIGHLIGHTS

Reentry Resource Fair

The Faulkner County Team had a great turnout at the First Annual ReEntry Resource Fair on April 17, 2012. The event closed out the day with 172 Customers and 32 exhibitors. This event was a collaborative effort between the Department of Community Correction, Life After Prison Ministries, and the Arkansas Workforce Center at Conway. The community of Conway stepped up and provided food, tables and volunteers, free t-shirts, banners, etc for the event. It was a great event and one that has been duplicated across the state.

Local Area Performance

Local Area	Total Participants	ETA-O	
	Adults	22,459	
	Dislocated Workers	29	
	Older Youth	15	
	Younger Youth	96	
	Total Exitters		
	Adults	20,983	
	Dislocated Workers	29	
	Older Youth	9	
	Younger Youth	56	
			Negotiated Level
Entered Employment Rate	Adults	90.0	93.3
	Dislocated Workers	94.5	96.7
Retention Rate	Adults	92.5	93.3
	Dislocated Workers	95.5	98.0
Average Earnings	Adults	\$13,900	\$13,337
	Dislocated Workers	\$14,250	\$17,108
Placement in Employment or Educ.	Youth (14 - 21)	79.7	91.3
Attainment of Degree or Certificate	Youth (14 - 21)	76.9	79.1
Literacy or Numeracy Gains	Youth (14 - 21)	48.0	50.0
Overall Status of Performance	Not Met	Met	Exceeded
		X	

CITY OF LITTLE ROCK HIGHLIGHTS

Workforce Center Events

- Income Tax “Super Saturday” – The Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) Coalition hosted a volunteer income tax assistance site for qualifying employees and all eligible working individuals and families on Saturday, February 12, 2012.
- The Little Rock Workforce Center also hosted the graduation reception for the “Single Parent Scholarship Fund (SPSF) of Pulaski County on June 21, 2011. Graduates shared several inspiring stories. Senator Joyce Elliott was the featured speaker. The 2012 graduation was held on June 14, 2012. There were 20 graduates.
- Photo Contest: “Little Rock is Working.” The 2011 Little Rock is Working photo contest celebrated the best photos of people at work in Little Rock. The contest added to the Workforce Center’s permanent collection of inspiring, evocative, realistic, poignant photographs of Little Rock citizens while performing their work during the course of a normal workday.

Local Area Performance

Local Area	Total Participants	ETA-O		
	Adults	17,345		
	Dislocated Workers	71		
	Older Youth	25		
	Younger Youth	131		
	Total Exitors			
	Adults	15,309		
	Dislocated Workers	58		
	Older Youth	16		
	Younger Youth	73		
			Negotiated Level	Actual Level
Entered Employment Rate	Adults	92.0	90.0	
	Dislocated Workers	92.5	93.3	
Retention Rate	Adults	93.5	94.4	
	Dislocated Workers	95.5	97.4	
Average Earnings	Adults	\$13,900	\$10,020	
	Dislocated Workers	\$12,200	\$12,404	
Placement in Employment or Educ.	Youth (14 - 21)	79.7	83.2	
Attainment of Degree or Certificate	Youth (14 - 21)	76.9	65.7	
Literacy or Numeracy Gains	Youth (14 - 21)	48.0	66.7	
Overall Status of Performance	Not Met	Met	Exceeded	
	X			

Outreach and Training

- On 6/13/12 the “Clinton Climate Initiative and the HEAL AR Program held its first presentation to WFC employees of a program offering free home energy audits and deep discounts in making energy efficient investments in their homes.
- On 6/15/12 the “Young Parenting Grant” conducted a workshop on recognizing and preventing dating violence and domestic abuse, presented by Angela McGraw of the Arkansas Coalition Against Domestic Violence.

EASTERN ARKANSAS HIGHLIGHTS

WIA Youth ADTEC Day

Aviation Technology was the number one topic for 100 WIA Youth who participated in the WIA Youth - Arkansas Delta Training and Education Consortium (ADTEC) Day on June 25, 2012, which was held at the Workforce Technology Center on the Mid South Community College (MSCC) Campus in West Memphis, AR.

Various displays and hands-on exercises were set up, many manned by aviation students, to help the youth understand about the careers available through the aviation program at MSCC. The aviation program is available through a DOL Grant and a partnership with FedEx to help meet the need for airplane maintenance technicians for area employers. Youth explored processes related to aircraft engines, participated in an activity that involved starting an actual aircraft engine and were provided information about the Army National Guard and aviation opportunities -- to mention a few. A highlight of the event was when the youth were also given the opportunity to get into an army helicopter which was flown in specifically for this event. In addition, youth had their pictures taken in the pilot seat of a plane while wearing tee shirts that promoted Aviation Day. As the day ended the youth were given a book bag complete with educational materials about the aviation program and the enrollment process for college.

Regional Job and Career Expo

Approximately 400 jobseekers attended the Regional Job and Career Expo on October 13, 2011 at the EACC Fine Arts Center, which

Local Area Performance

Local Area	Total Participants	ETA-O		
	Adults	11,398		
	Dislocated Workers	15		
	Older Youth	8		
	Younger Youth	180		
	Total Exitters			
	Adults	11,313		
	Dislocated Workers	12		
	Older Youth	6		
	Younger Youth	78		
			Negotiated Level	Actual Level
Entered Employment Rate	Adults	89.0	83.2	
	Dislocated Workers	91.5	100.0	
Retention Rate	Adults	84.5	92.7	
	Dislocated Workers	95.5	87.5	
Average Earnings	Adults	\$9,500	\$11,991	
	Dislocated Workers	\$12,200	\$15,938	
Placement in Employment or Educ.	Youth (14 - 21)	79.7	81.8	
Attainment of Degree or Certificate	Youth (14 - 21)	76.9	80.0	
Literacy or Numeracy Gains	Youth (14 - 21)	48.0	60.0	
Overall Status of Performance	Not Met	Met	Exceeded	
			X	

was hosted by the Arkansas Workforce Centers of Eastern Arkansas, Department of Workforce Services (DWS), East Arkansas Community College (EACC) and Career Pathways. There were 52 vendors who attended the event and who were also taking applications for current jobs openings. Representatives from the Career Pathways program hosted a breakfast for the vendors to tell them about the Arkansas Career Readiness Certificate and how the program prepares jobseekers.

They were also informed about the services offered through the Workforce Centers. Lunch was provided by DWS and a mobile unit was on site so jobseekers could register for work in the Arkansas Job Link (AJL) system.

NORTH CENTRAL ARKANSAS HIGHLIGHTS

Summer Employment Program for Youth

Growing up in a small rural community, where the population of most towns in North Central Arkansas is less than 1,000, makes finding a summer job for the majority of young people virtually impossible. Even though there has been a decrease in funds in the past few years, over 70 young persons were provided a means to earn money for themselves and their family through the WIA Summer Employment Program. Eligible youth were placed in employment where they had a specific interest, whenever possible. Participation by various businesses was tremendous with many being a part of the program for several years. Some of those participating businesses included dental offices, banks, medical offices, grocery stores, schools, veterinarian clinics, county and city offices, retail stores and non-profits. Occupational skills were addressed through work experience 32 hours per week and academic learning was addressed through interest inventory assessment, completion of job applications and summer school. The hands-on experience and the opportunity to earn wages were invaluable to the youth in the North Central region.

Youth Career Days and Job Fairs

Several Youth Career Days and job fairs were conducted this spring in the North Central LWIA region. More than 100 youth from surrounding schools, as well as out-of-school youth, attended a Youth Career Day at the Arkansas Workforce Center in Batesville. The Arkansas Workforce mobile unit was on site for youth to tour and have hands-on experience with the myriad of services offered inside the mobile unit through "Real Life Arkansas". Some of the services included

Local Area Performance

Local Area	Total Participants	ETA-O		
North Central	Adults	11,950		
	Dislocated Workers	71		
	Older Youth	12		
	Younger Youth	166		
	Total Exitters			
	Adults	10,595		
	Dislocated Workers	53		
	Older Youth	7		
	Younger Youth	157		
			Negotiated Level	Actual Level
Entered Employment Rate	Adults	92.5	93.9	
	Dislocated Workers	97.5	94.5	
Retention Rate	Adults	93.5	96.0	
	Dislocated Workers	95.5	98.0	
Average Earnings	Adults	\$11,000	\$13,445	
	Dislocated Workers	\$12,200	\$15,639	
Placement in Employment or Educ.	Youth (14 - 21)	79.7	81.5	
Attainment of Degree or Certificate	Youth (14 - 21)	76.9	91.0	
Literacy or Numeracy Gains	Youth (14 - 21)	48.0	100.0	
Overall Status of Performance	Not Met	Met	Exceeded	
			X	

Career Readiness planning and certification, labor market information, resume preparation, job listing, work experience, and information and referral for support services. Workforce Center partners and area businesses also hosted a cookout for the participants. In White County, a Youth Career Day was held in conjunction with a job fair on the campus of ASU-Searcy. The Arkansas Workforce Center, ASU-Searcy and ASU-Beebe sponsored the event which attracted around 400 participants and close to 30 businesses. A variety of businesses were on hand for the job fair such as manufacturing companies, several branches of the military, oil and natural gas companies, and schools. The employers accepted applications on site. The Workforce mobile unit was available at the event, where individuals were registered for employment, assisted with resumes and job referrals. All schools in White County were invited. There was a large response in the number of seniors attending as well. The Arkansas Workforce Center also participated in a job fair sponsored by ASU in Heber Springs. Approximately 100 individuals attended this event which was primarily aimed at students enrolled at ASU-Heber Springs.

NORTHEAST ARKANSAS HIGHLIGHTS

Significant events in Northeast Arkansas during Program Year 2011 included a National Emergency Grant work program, employer layoffs and re-hires, and continued decreases in funding levels.

- As PY 11 began, Northeast received an NEG grant to provide cleanup to cities and counties affected by tornadoes and floods in the spring of 2011. Temporary jobs were provided to 76 workers between August and December 2011. Participants were mostly long-term unemployed and worked at cleaning and repairing park facilities, removing debris from public properties, clearing ditches, culverts and rights-of-way, and repairing damaged city streets. The jobs were full-time and in most cases paid around \$10 per hour. All NEG funds were expended by January 2012. Participants and city officials alike expressed gratitude for the work, and a few participants received permanent employment following their NEG participation.
- A continued decline in allocations to the area resulted in fewer participants being served in PY 11, and a greater emphasis on classroom training, with fewer work experience jobs for participants. WIA staff was also reduced in PY 11, to limit staff and overhead costs, and leave more dollars available for participant training.
- Economic conditions in the Northeast LWIA were mixed during PY 11. Significant layoffs were announced at StarTek and Quadgraphics in Jonesboro, dislocating almost 1,000 workers at those two employers alone. However, StarTek later

Local Area Performance

Local Area	Total Participants	ETA-O		
Northeast 	Adults	24,664		
	Dislocated Workers	116		
	Older Youth	50		
	Younger Youth	282		
	Total Exitters			
	Adults	23,065		
	Dislocated Workers	89		
	Older Youth	32		
	Younger Youth	118		
			Negotiated Level	Actual Level
Entered Employment Rate	Adults	92.5	95.3	
	Dislocated Workers	92.5	97.0	
Retention Rate	Adults	93.5	97.0	
	Dislocated Workers	95.5	97.9	
Average Earnings	Adults	\$13,900	\$13,957	
	Dislocated Workers	\$14,500	\$13,421	
Placement in Employment or Educ.	Youth (14 - 21)	79.7	94.3	
Attainment of Degree or Certificate	Youth (14 - 21)	76.9	81.1	
Literacy or Numeracy Gains	Youth (14 - 21)	48.0	91.9	
Overall Status of Performance	Not Met	Met	Exceeded	
		X		

announced that almost 300 workers would be re-hired when a new customer service client was found. Long-time area employers such as NiDec, LA Darling in Paragould and Coming, and Wise Company experienced significant layoffs, but WIA staff continued to place applicants with such employers as American Railcar, Utility Trailer, Nestle' and Anchor Packaging. Northeast Arkansas Baptist Hospital worked rapidly during PY 11 toward completing their new hospital under construction in Jonesboro, and WIA recruitment in healthcare training was increased in anticipation of its completion next year.

- The Blytheville Workforce Center remained in its temporary location at Burdette during PY 11, but as the year drew to a close, staff there are eagerly anticipating moving into a permanent location on the ANC Blytheville campus in the next few months.

NORTHWEST ARKANSAS HIGHLIGHTS

Highlights for the Northwest Arkansas Local Area include:

- In Northwest (NW) the Washington County Drug/Workforce Diversion court utilizes the CRC as a tool to help individuals become responsible citizens.
- NW Youth Summer Program had partnerships with Newton County Resource Council, Cooperative Extension, Jasper School, City of Jasper and WIA provider to offer a summer day camp for area youth where the WIA youth worked as counselors and mentor for the younger youth. Attendance was nearly perfect and leadership skills developed will serve our youth well.
- NW continues to work with the NWA Council Educational Excellence and Workforce Development workgroup to carry out the strategic plan. They continue to work with the Heartland 411 (Four State Workforce group) to promote our area and foster economic development throughout the region.
- NW provided laptops to three offices to assist with demand of employers for CRC job seekers. They proactively developed one WIA staff person in Mountain Home to become Work Keys proctor in order to meet the needs of an employer.
- With National Emergency Grants NW was able to quickly and effectively get things moving and completed. They placed 182 dislocated workers at 23 worksites throughout all nine counties. Twenty-three have been hired by their worksites.

Local Area Performance

Local Area	Total Participants	ETA-O		
Northwest 	Adults	29,649		
	Dislocated Workers	210		
	Older Youth	45		
	Younger Youth	262		
	Total Exitters			
	Adults	27,259		
	Dislocated Workers	143		
	Older Youth	30		
	Younger Youth	118		
			Negotiated Level	Actual Level
Entered Employment Rate	Adults	92.0	93.0	
	Dislocated Workers	92.5	94.7	
Retention Rate	Adults	94.0	93.0	
	Dislocated Workers	95.5	96.5	
Average Earnings	Adults	\$13,700	\$12,699	
	Dislocated Workers	\$12,200	\$14,196	
Placement in Employment or Educ.	Youth (14 - 21)	79.7	75.4	
Attainment of Degree or Certificate	Youth (14 - 21)	76.9	79.2	
Literacy or Numeracy Gains	Youth (14 - 21)	48.0	100.0	
Overall Status of Performance	Not Met	Met	Exceeded	
	x			

SOUTHEAST ARKANSAS HIGHLIGHTS

The seven (7) Workforce Centers operating in Southeast Arkansas last year documented over 61,000 visitors that were seeking some type of service. The majority of the visitors were job seekers and over 1,500 of those individuals were able to obtain employment as a result of visiting the Centers. A large number of visitors were youth; at one point in the youth program, the Southeast Workforce Investment Area had 250 active youth which were receiving some type service to improve their basic skills, employability skills and work skills. The Southeast Workforce Investment Area also provided training assistance to 82 adults and dislocated workers during program year 2011 – 2012; of those 82 individuals in training, 58 graduated, which is 70% of those enrolled. That number indicates that the training program is really successful and in fact proves to have a positive return on the dollar invested. While funding allocations continue to decline, the Southeast Workforce Investment Board continues to make adjustments in operations that will best serve the clients and employers within the service area as indicated with the above information.

Local Area Performance

Local Area	Total Participants	ETA-O	
Southeast 	Adults	6,974	
	Dislocated Workers	27	
	Older Youth	10	
	Younger Youth	201	
	Total Exitters		
	Adults	5,775	
	Dislocated Workers	31	
	Older Youth	7	
	Younger Youth	142	
			Negotiated Level
Entered Employment Rate	Adults	88.0	82.8
	Dislocated Workers	93.5	97.4
Retention Rate	Adults	91.5	93.5
	Dislocated Workers	95.5	96.4
Average Earnings	Adults	\$13,000	\$13,648
	Dislocated Workers	\$14,650	\$14,084
Placement in Employment or Educ.	Youth (14 - 21)	79.7	81.1
Attainment of Degree or Certificate	Youth (14 - 21)	76.9	86.8
Literacy or Numeracy Gains	Youth (14 - 21)	48.0	50.0
Overall Status of Performance	Not Met	Met	Exceeded
		x	

SOUTHWEST ARKANSAS HIGHLIGHTS

“It takes a village to raise a child” is truly reflected by the Disconnected Youth Project in Southwest Arkansas. This is a project birthed through the Southwest Arkansas Youth Council and the Southwest Arkansas Youth Development Collaborative and is funded through a grant awarded by The Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation of Little Rock, Arkansas. This project is an ongoing, collaborative effort with partners, including Southern Arkansas University-Tech in Camden, AR, Ouachita County career coaches, Ouachita County Adult Education, Arkansas Department of Human Services, the Workforce Investment Act, Ouachita County School Superintendents and Counselors, and other agencies that assist in identifying at-risk youth such as South Arkansas Youth Services (SAYS, Inc.).

Under the direction of Ms. Danita Webster, a brilliant and enthusiastic advocate of young people, partnerships have been developed to include state agencies, economic development organizations, business and industry associations and community-based and faith based organizations, in the development and implementation of targeted workforce services for youth in Southwest Arkansas. Approximately 150 students from 5 school districts have been served through the Disconnected Youth Project and approximately 215 students were referred to the project as of the Spring of 2012.

The overall purpose of the Disconnected Youth project is to provide early intervention and prevention services through workforce readiness. Students have been introduced

Local Area Performance

Local Area	Total Participants	ETA-O	
	Adults	14,174	
	Dislocated Workers	62	
	Older Youth	22	
	Younger Youth	94	
	Total Exitters		
	Adults	12,532	
	Dislocated Workers	41	
	Older Youth	13	
	Younger Youth	34	
			Negotiated Level
Entered Employment Rate	Adults	92.0	88.7
	Dislocated Workers	92.0	97.7
Retention Rate	Adults	91.5	92.0
	Dislocated Workers	95.5	96.2
Average Earnings	Adults	\$11,500	\$13,089
	Dislocated Workers	\$14,600	\$15,127
Placement in Employment or Educ.	Youth (14 - 21)	79.7	74.4
Attainment of Degree or Certificate	Youth (14 - 21)	76.9	83.0
Literacy or Numeracy Gains	Youth (14 - 21)	48.00	100.00
Overall Status of Performance	Not Met	Met	Exceeded
			x

to sustainable traits such as reliability, stability, and marketability through mini-workshops developed for at-risk students. These workshops included:

- Workplace Readiness & Pre-Employability Skills Training
- Character Building
- Dress for Success
- Test Taking Strategies
- Job Application / Mock Interviews Training
- Workplace Etiquette Training

At the request of the Southwest Arkansas Youth Council, due to the outstanding success of this project, services are being expanded to include Dallas and Calhoun County youth. These services will begin in Fall 2012.

WEST CENTRAL ARKANSAS HIGHLIGHTS

West Central Arkansas Workforce Center Partnership

The partnership in the West Central area continues to be strong and has proved invaluable in providing services to our customers. The partners provide a variety of services and resources to customers seeking all different kinds of assistance and information.

The partner agencies of the West Central Arkansas Workforce Centers meet quarterly to discuss current and up-coming activities within the respective agencies. This information is then shared with AWC staff which enables customers to be referred for services they may not know is available. The West Central Arkansas Workforce Centers welcomed 143,228 customers during PY 2011.

The West Central Arkansas Workforce Center also has a Business Service Representative that travels the ten county area providing information to employers on the services available through the Center. Employers are assisted with the posting of job vacancies, referrals, assessment, and space to interview applicants, as well as other information and services. The Business Service Representative serves as a team member with partner agencies that are looking for job development opportunities for their programs such as AARP, Experience Works, Job Service, TEA, Veterans, and WIA. We are very proud of this collaboration.

Local Area Performance

Local Area	Total Participants	ETA-O		
	Adults	19,318		
	Dislocated Workers	27		
	Older Youth	14		
	Younger Youth	38		
	Total Exitters			
	Adults	17,993		
	Dislocated Workers	19		
	Older Youth	12		
	Younger Youth	27		
			Negotiated Level	Actual Level
Entered Employment Rate	Adults	89.5	96.4	
	Dislocated Workers	94.5	92.3	
Retention Rate	Adults	93.5	93.5	
	Dislocated Workers	95.5	100.0	
Average Earnings	Adults	\$13,500	\$19,071	
	Dislocated Workers	\$12,200	\$10,815	
Placement in Employment or Educ.	Youth (14 - 21)	79.7	87.0	
Attainment of Degree or Certificate	Youth (14 - 21)	76.9	79.5	
Literacy or Numeracy Gains	Youth (14 - 21)	48.0	100.00	
Overall Status of Performance	Not Met	Met	Exceeded	
	x			

West Central Partners and Employers Host Job Fair

The West Central Arkansas Workforce Center in Malvern joined forces with Sykes and other local employers to host a job fair for area residents. The event was held on a Saturday and local employers provided information on services and job openings. The Arkansas Workforce Center mobile unit was available and assisted customers with resume and job search assistance throughout the day. The Arkansas Workforce Center in Malvern and Arkadelphia hosted a booth which exhibited partner agency information and literature for all attendees.

WESTERN ARKANSAS HIGHLIGHTS

The Western Workforce Investment Area has implemented a “more with less” philosophy for the operation of the year-round Youth Program. With budget restraints, and a struggling economy, this philosophy is essential to the success of the program. Western has focused on building solid relationships within the community in order to establish a safety net for their young clients. These relationships provide foundational support and early exposure to the real world of work and are vital to the personal growth of the clients. The level of nurturing the client receives through customized training sites is unparalleled in the general private sector. Services such as mentoring, leadership development, flexibility in scheduling, and a genuine concern for the youth’s well being, all contribute to a sense of confidence and self-respect. A well-rounded youth is more likely to stay in school and continue into higher education and become a productive, tax-paying citizen. This is the ultimate goal for the Youth Program in Western Arkansas.

Local Area Performance

Local Area	Total Participants	ETA-O		
Western 	Adults	12,918		
	Dislocated Workers	96		
	Older Youth	20		
	Younger Youth	50		
	Total Exitters			
	Adults	11,561		
	Dislocated Workers	66		
	Older Youth	13		
	Younger Youth	35		
			Negotiated Level	Actual Level
Entered Employment Rate	Adults	92.0	100.0	
	Dislocated Workers	93.5	97.7	
Retention Rate	Adults	91.5	95.2	
	Dislocated Workers	95.5	97.9	
Average Earnings	Adults	\$11,400	\$13,205	
	Dislocated Workers	\$13,000	\$12,069	
Placement in Employment or Educ.	Youth (14 - 21)	79.7	97.6	
Attainment of Degree or Certificate	Youth (14 - 21)	76.9	78.8	
Literacy or Numeracy Gains	Youth (14 - 21)	48.0	100.0	
Overall Status of Performance	Not Met	Met	Exceeded	
		X		

SUCCESS STORIES

TIFFANY SMALLWOOD

Tiffany Smallwood came to the Workforce Center in Benton in December 2009 seeking financial assistance to continue the Registered Nursing program at Baptist Health Schools in Little Rock. Tiffany is married and has two small children. She worked at a Day Care Pre-School and JC Penny in the past, but even with her working the family was unable to generate an income above the poverty level. By the fall of 2009, Tiffany made up her mind to go back to school and get a job that would enable her family to be self sufficient. She knew the next 2 years would be far from easy but she was determined. If exhausting days and late nights were sacrifices she had to make to have her dreams come true, Tiffany was ready and willing. If along the way her children somehow realized she was trying to be an example and inspiration to them, then that would be icing on the cake!

Tiffany completed the WIA application process and was determined eligible for WIA funding. Equipped now with a Pell Grant and WIA assistance, there may not have been a more enthusiastic, resolute nursing student that began the January 2010 semester at Baptist Health. Tiffany graduated June 9, 2011 with a Registered Nursing Certification and received her RN License on July 27, 2011. In April of 2011, Tiffany was offered a job in the Intermediate Care Unit, a step-down unit of the Pediatric Intensive Care Unit at Arkansas Children's Hospital (ACH) where she was doing her clinical rotation. Tiffany had completed clinical rotations in several other hospitals, but training at ACH stole her heart. From the first day Tiffany walked into ACH, her gratitude for the two wonderfully healthy children she had made her feel ACH was where she belonged. Tiffany believes her nursing skills, patience and kind, motherly touch are God given and it is therefore her obligation to give back to Him, through the love and care she provides to each of her patients, that with

which she has been blessed.

Tiffany says there is no way she would be where she is today without WIA. She said this past Christmas was the best their family had ever had and every time she bought a gift for her children she thought about how fortunate she was to be a Registered Nurse. Plans to take a vacation to the beach around the 4th of July this year are also going to be a first for their family and something Tiffany said she would never have imagined they would have the opportunity to do.

The Benton Workforce Center is very proud of all the time and effort Tiffany was willing to invest in her training and proud to have been a part of making her dreams a reality. Because ACH "treats all children and their parents/caregivers with care, compassion, and understanding" and because ACH "ministers to the emotional, social, educational and recreational needs of hospitalized children and adolescents and utilizes developmentally appropriate activities to minimize stress and anxiety and foster positive feelings about health care", we are certain every child Tiffany takes care of will be blessed with much, much more than just great medical care.

EMMANUEL FITZ

Emmanuel Fitz was placed at the Department of Workforce Services in Newport on work experience during the ARRA summer program. After his work experience, he qualified to receive WIA assistance to continue his college education at UCA in Conway. During this time he received disability counseling to aide his learning challenges. After overcoming those challenges, his grades improved and he was named to the Dean's list. He was interviewed by KATV Channel 7 as football manager for UCA and was voted team captain of the football team. He graduated December 17, 2011 with a Bachelor of Arts degree. Soon after graduating, Emmanuel had two offers for employment, one with UCA and the other with the Arkansas Department of Workforce Services in Newport. He

chose to take the job at DWS where he continues employment today and is very appreciative of WIA services that helped to make his endeavors possible.

JENNIFER MELBOURNE

In January 2011, Jennifer came into the Arkansas Workforce Center in Searcy needing assistance to help her get through school. At that time she was not working but was attending ASU Jonesboro full time to earn her Bachelor of Science degree in accounting. Since Jennifer was laid off from the Census Bureau in July 2010, she was eligible for WIA assistance as a Dislocated Worker. In the spring semester 2011 she transferred to UALR to complete her degree in accounting. In February 2011, she obtained employment at Liberty Tax Service in Bryant as an assistant to a tax preparer where she worked full-time during tax season and part-time during the off season. Jennifer was a fast learner and soon received a promotion. After proving her abilities, she began training the other part-time employees for the upcoming year. Jennifer hoped to obtain full-time employment at Liberty Tax Service once she attained her degree. She graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree on May 12, 2012, but, unfortunately, Liberty Tax Service was not hiring at the time. Two weeks after Jennifer received her college degree, she obtained employment at Hix Law Firm in Little Rock as a tax preparer and is currently still working there. At her graduation ceremony at UALR, Jennifer expressed her thanks to her WIA case manager Kaitlyn Aldridge who was there watching her get her diploma and for the WIA services. She told Kaitlyn that it would not have been possible for her to fulfill her career goal without the WIA assistance.

ALLYSSA YOUNG

Allyssa Young, a single woman with one dependent, was previously a recipient of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). She graduated with a Bachelor of Social Work from the University of Arkansas in 2010. After searching for employment

for one year with no success, Allyssa enrolled in the Workforce Investment Act Adult program on February 16, 2011, seeking support in finding employment. Her WIA Career Specialist assisted her with updating her resume. She also attended the Little Rock Workforce Center's Employability Workshops to improve her interviewing skills. On June 20, 2011 Allyssa accepted an administrative assistant position with the Little Rock Job Corps.

RODERICK BAILEY

Roderick Bailey is an ex-offender who completed C-I Truck Driver Training in December 2010. After conducting a job search for several months with the support of WIA, he obtained two jobs with competitive hourly wages. He recently accepted full-time employment with the Arkansas Highway Transportation Department and works part-time for the Red Cross.

AARON SCOTT

Aaron Scott is a 19 year-old who graduated from high school in 2010. He is the youngest of ten children. When he first became involved with the LR area Workforce Center as a student, he was quiet and withdrawn but has since become a positive thinker and a more productive human being. Aaron joined and completed the AmeriCorps Project and has earned many certificates for his outstanding job accomplishments. He plans to attend UALR.

JOSHUA SIMS

Joshua Sims first came to the Little Rock Area Workforce Center as a homeless father of a two-year old daughter. He is the oldest of four children. Since enrolling in WIA, he has completed high school, works with AmeriCorps and is no longer homeless.

EDMOND WHITE

Edmond White had been unemployed since November 2009 when Polymer Group Inc. in North Little Rock closed its doors. He later enrolled in WAGE classes

offered by Pulaski County Adult Ed. Upon completing the WAGE requirements, Mr. White obtained a job training internship with the Department of Workforce Services. He later obtained a position as a Claims Adjudicator with the Benefit Payment Control Office of the Department of Workforce Services.

JERRY YOUNG

Jerry Young, from Lee County, was laid off from his previous job, was only making \$8 per hour and did not have the skills to obtain employment with a "living wage."

Jerry visited the Arkansas Workforce Center in Marianna and inquired about services and specifically about any assistance to pay for occupational skills training at Crowley's Ridge Technical Institute (CRTI). His lifetime goal was to become an EMT so that he could help others.

Jerry was enrolled into the Workforce Investment Act Dislocated Worker program and later graduated from CRTI as an EMT with honors. Immediately after graduating he began working at Southern Paramedics in Brinkley, AR. He eventually transferred to St. Francis County Emergency Medical Services, continued his education and now is a paramedic.

ALEX GREEN

Alex Green is a 2012 graduate from Hughes High School and currently an East Arkansas Community College (EACC) freshman. Alex became a youth participant with the Workforce Investment Act of Eastern Arkansas as a junior in high school. While in the program, Alex participated in leadership development opportunities such as: exposure to postsecondary educational opportunities, college preparation and ACT, community service learning projects, and more. Alex also participated in summer work experience where he gained work ethics and new job skills.

Alex is studying diesel technology at EACC in concurrent courses with a 4.0 GPA, working part time, and is a volunteer firefighter with the Hughes Fire Department.

This summer, Alex was introduced to the Aviation Technology program at Mid-South Community College (MSCC) during the WIA Youth/ADTEC Aviation Day and would like to eventually enroll into this program.

TREMAYNE CHAVIS

Tremayne Chavis was enrolled in the WIA Youth Program in 2009 while in the 10th grade at West Memphis High School (WMHS) and living in a foster residence. During this time he has been an excellent participant and leader to the other youth in the program. During one of the leadership activities he earned his CPR/First Aid Certification and in addition received very high evaluations and praise as a very respectful young man by his supervisors during the summer component. Tremayne also -- upon graduation -- received the West Memphis High School Leadership Award.

He now plans to attend Crowley's Ridge College in Paragould Arkansas where he has received several scholarships including the Ambassador Scholarship and a scholarship to play soccer. Tremayne said, "This is one of the greatest milestones I have achieved in my life. As a foster child I can truly say to others anything is possible."

HARRIET STEIMER

When the plant-wide layoff occurred at American Railcar Industries, Harriet Steimer was not sure which direction to go, because all the plants in the area were laying people off or shutting down.

About ten years ago, she had started work on an Associate's degree, and decided that now would be a good time to go to school and finish. The funding from the WIA program allowed her to obtain an

Associate's degree in Accounting. Due to a lack of financial resources of her own, she would have found it extremely difficult if not impossible to pay for tuition, books, and afford the gas to drive back and forth to school. The job market in her local area was a little grim at the time of her graduation on December 15, 2011. However, she had high hopes that armed with a degree in Accounting and tax time coming up; she would be able to find a job. She relates that she could not have been more wrong about obtaining a job due to the economy. There were few available jobs, and those that she found paid minimum wage, with crazy hours.

The WIA staff placed her in a job at Black River Technical College. This was her niche; she loved the college and enjoyed the work. Her co-workers took time to teach her how to make brochures, pamphlets, and use computer programs that she had learned about in college. After four months at the college, she accepted a bookkeeping job with the Greene County Industrial Training Council. Now she is able to put to use the skills learned in her degree field and she thoroughly enjoys the work.

Without the WIA program, this would not have been possible. She is so thankful for the opportunity she received in the WIA program. She says that it has changed her life and given her opportunities that she would never have had without it.

JOSH DAWSON

During his junior year in high school, Josh Dawson applied for the WIA youth program and was provided a work experience opportunity at Hoxie High School. When he went back to school that fall, he learned that he did not have enough credits to graduate with his class, so he quit school. Eventually, with the encouragement of his mother and his WIA case manager, he enrolled in the Walnut Ridge Adult Education Center GED program. To make life a little more challenging he learned that his girlfriend became

pregnant and they got married.

Josh did not pass the math portion of the GED test. Discouraged, he quit going to GED classes, and temporarily found a job. Since he was so close to completing his GED, his mom, wife, and case manager continued to encourage him to return to GED classes. He worked another summer on the WIA youth program, and as Josh put it, his case manager "nagged me like a mama" to get his GED.

After Josh's son was born he told his case manager that he realized he needed to complete the GED to better himself and to support his wife and son. He knew that without an education he was not going to be able to get a good job. In May 2011, he successfully completed the GED program, and went to work full-time for a lawn & landscaping business. Later he decided to reduce his hours and enroll at Black River Technical College in the fall 2011 semester.

Josh continues to attend Black River Tech where he is making good grades and steady progress toward an associate degree in business. He also employed with a local construction company, making a good wage and working up to 32 hours a week. Once he completes college, Josh's goal is to start his own business.

Josh says that he is very thankful for the continued encouragement of his WIA case manager, who helped his mom and wife keep him focused on completing his GED and for the financial assistance he received from WIA. When he was told how proud the WIA staff was of his accomplishments, his response was, "I'm proud of myself!" The self-confidence and maturity Josh has developed during his participation in the WIA youth program makes him a success.

LARRY KERSEY

Larry Kersey said that when he was laid off indefinitely he had no idea what he was going to do for work. What he did know was that the economy being very

bad at the time, was going to make it impossible to find a job earning as much money as he did at his job at a wire manufacturing plant. He had worked at the plant three years and had just reached the top-out pay as an extrusion operator. The company is located in Northeast Arkansas and paid exceptionally good wages for that area of the state. Larry was a high school graduate, but had never attended college. He had the confidence in himself that he knew he could earn a degree if he had the opportunity to attend college.

With the financial help of WIA and assistance from the Greene County case managers from the Arkansas Workforce Center in Paragould, he enrolled at Black River Technical College on August 21, 2009. WIA paid for tuition and books. On December 16, 2011, Larry graduated with an Associate of Applied Science in Industrial Maintenance Technologies.

Larry says he is thankful for the people and programs like WIA for helping him achieve his educational goals. It has been a struggle for him and his family to overcome the day to day financial difficulties and says that he could not have made it by himself if it had not been for the help from WIA. He says he truly needed help at that point in his life and the WIA program did that for him.

RACHELLE MITCHELL

Rachelle Mitchell began her journey to a higher education at the age of 40, with her son still living in her home. She discovered that returning to school after being out for so many years was a struggle in itself, not to mention the daily stressors of life like shelter, food, and transportation to and from class, and to clinical locations all over northeast Arkansas. She states that the financial aspects would have been a tremendous burden. She believes that she would have withdrawn from the nursing program at Black River Technical College if it hadn't been for the help she received from

WIA. Receiving financial assistance from WIA allowed her to stay focused on school and not on the outside stressors. She says that she could not image how she could have paid for the tuition, books, and school fees. She felt a sense of personal accomplishment at graduation time from the LPN program on May 4, 2012. She is focused on taking the upcoming state board exams, and is optimistic about passing. Rachelle is very proud of the education she received at Black River Technical College, and is extremely thankful to WIA for helping her accomplish that dream.

CODY HOGAN

Cody Hogan of Leachville struggled with his very first job this past summer, but in the end, he was excited to have learned so much about his worksite and himself. Cody was home-schooled, and received his GED through Arkansas Northeastern College's Adult Education Center. After that, he was referred to the Blytheville Workforce Center for help finding a job and gaining basic work skills. His timing was good, in that the WIA Summer Youth Program was just about to start in the Northeast area. He was determined eligible for WIA, and placed as a groundskeeper for the City of Leachville.

Cody didn't like the job very much at first. As a home-schooled student and a first-time employee, he was inexperienced at dealing with others and sometimes he didn't quite know how to interact with his co-workers. He certainly didn't feel he fit in. Most of his co-workers had worked together many years, and the nicknames and inside jokes they all had, made him feel like an outsider. But he didn't give up, and he soon found his co-workers weren't so bad after all. When his family's car, their only means of transportation, quit during the middle of the program and couldn't be fixed, his co-workers picked him up each day for work. His co-workers, too, had noticed that Cody didn't quit, didn't complain, and was eager to learn. Soon he had

a nickname just like all the others, which really helped his confidence. From commenting in the beginning on his lack of experience, his worksite supervisors began to praise him for being a hard worker and a fast learner. At the end of his summer employment, Cody stated that he learned several things. He'd had no idea how much work it takes to keep a small city going, and he also learned the value of dependability and teamwork. Through his first summer job, he realized the importance of setting goals and the reward of a job well done.

Cody has begun to believe in himself and continues to set personal goals. His first job, and the encouragement and support he received there, has given him the confidence to enroll at Arkansas Northeastern College this fall and begin working toward a Computer Information Systems degree. His WIA Case Manager knows he can do it, and says he just needed the chance to see that for himself.

YOLANDA WATSON

Yolanda Watson became a client of the Pine Bluff Workforce Center in the fall of 2009. She was seeking more gainful employment while attending classes at Southeast Arkansas College, with higher hopes of being accepted into the Registered Nursing Program Jefferson Regional Medical Center School of Nursing. Yolanda was a single mother of two children; her family was receiving public assistance and she was also working part time as a Patient Care Tech at JRMC to provide for herself and her family.

On November 24, 2009 Yolanda was accepted into the RN Program at JRMC. After providing core services to Yolanda, her Career Consultant decided that she was a prime candidate for WIA training assistance. Yolanda was a perfect client as expected; she provided everything that was needed for eligibility determination in a timely manner and throughout her enrollment as

a client in training. Her RN training started on January 4, 2010, after overcoming many obstacles throughout her life, including delivering her third child during the last term of nursing school. We are pleased to say that Yolanda graduated on December 8, 2011 with a Registered Nursing Degree and started to work at Jefferson Regional Medical Center on January 16, 2012 as a Transitional Care Nurse with a hourly rate of pay starting at \$24.25. This is a perfect example of how the program is designed to work; a positive return on the dollar spent. Instead of Yolanda being on public assistance and taking money out of the economy; she is now off public assistance, supporting herself and her family in addition to being a positive asset to the economy. This is just one of many examples illustrating how the Arkansas Workforce Centers in Southeast Arkansas were able to make a positive difference in someone's life, while improving the local economy.

MARILYN HAYNES

Marilyn Haynes is a single mother with three minor children who had worked all her adult life to create a home for herself and her family. When circumstances arose that threatened her family's well-being, Marilyn came to WIA for help. She completed her application in the fall of 2009 as a Dislocated Worker from SAPA in Magnolia. She had worked there for 20 years before being laid off and had planned to retire from there. After the reorganization and subsequent downsizing, Marilyn realized that although she had good work habits and skills, she needed an education to highlight her skills and make her more marketable when she had to re-enter the workforce. To this end, Marilyn started back to school on her own and came to WIA after completing one semester toward an Associates of Applied Science in General Business at South Arkansas Community College.

Marilyn began receiving WIA services in the spring of 2009. She received tuition assistance, fees, books

and mandatory supplies. Additionally she received transportation assistance to provide money for the 80 mile round trip drive to school every day. Marilyn also received PELL and Federal Work Study to augment her expenses while in school. She also received Unemployment Assistance while she was in school until it expired in March 2010.

Because she was a Dislocated Worker, when SAPA was approved for a Certification from TAA, she was also approved to receive TAA benefits. TAA worked with South Arkansas Community College and WIA to provide training services to Marilyn during her last year of college. Marilyn completed her Associates of Applied Science degree in General Business May 13, 2011 with a 3.13 GPA. She also graduated on the Dean's List. While Marilyn had gained some office experience through Work Study while in college she still did not have much experience in her new field. Because of this she was awarded a Work Experience at the Women's Small Business Development Center in El Dorado. The position was as an administrative assistant to the Director of the center, Sherry Howard. Marilyn started her Work Experience job on June 5 2011. While participating on Work Experience, Marilyn was required to keep her resume updated as she learned new skills at the training site and continue to apply and interview for a full time position. Her work experience was for 90 days and would end on September 5, 2011. This would give Marilyn time to create a dynamic resume, build her network of professional contacts, interview and hopefully find a new job during her Work Experience time. This was explained to Sherry Howard, who was supportive of the idea that Marilyn would be job searching while working. In August of 2011, a position became available with the Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation. This foundation provides the funding for the Women's Small Business Development Center. The position was full time, with benefits and Marilyn was encouraged to apply. On September 6, 2011 Marilyn

became the second paid employee of the SBDC in El Dorado. She now enjoys a job helping others learn the skills they need to start their own businesses reach their own goals. Marilyn Hayes, through hard work and determination, has indeed become a Workforce Investment Act success story.

PAUL MANNING

Paul Manning sought assistance from WIA after being laid off from Pilgrim's Pride when the El Dorado Plant closed in 2009. After working in maintenance for five years, Paul decided that he wanted a career change that he was interested in and that he would enjoy doing for the rest of his life. Paul chose nursing and soon found out this career, according to the state of Arkansas, was a high demand career that would offer him numerous job opportunities upon completion. Paul began his training spring semester 2010 at South Arkansas Community College. He completed his prerequisite courses and was accepted into the nursing program August 2010. Paul worked very hard during training and kept a 4.0 grade point average until his final semester in the nursing program. Paul requested transportation assistance while in our program to make certain that he was able to attend his classes and clinicals everyday. While in the program, Paul was able to land a patient care tech position at the Medical Center of South Arkansas. This opened a window of opportunity for Paul to become employed with their facility after graduation. Paul was on dean's list fall and spring 2010/2011 and was named to the President's honor roll after his first year in the program. Paul completed his training at South Ark and graduated August 11, 2011. He graduated with a 3.84 cumulative GPA and as a member of Phi Theta Kappa (honor roll). After graduating, Paul was also nominated for Who's Who among College Students at South Arkansas Community College. After completing his degree plan, a full time job was offered to him on September 2, 2011. He began working as an LPN on the third floor of the

Medical Center of South Arkansas earning \$12.00/hr. Paul continues to work for the Medical Center today. Paul explained to me the last time that we spoke that he couldn't have picked a better career, and that he is able to go to work each and do something that he loves to do; help people and their families become healthier and live better lives together.

JOSHUA TATUM

Joshua Tatum came to WIA for assistance to complete his LPN training in December 2010. He is a single father with a young daughter and was determined to have a better life for his child and himself. He is a very caring and compassionate man and after completing his comprehensive assessments, nursing was determined to be the best choice for him. Since this is a nontraditional occupation for a man, he overcame several obstacles in training. He qualified for financial aid so WIA was able to provide him with supportive services, primarily transportation assistance. His determination and love for this occupation drove him and helped him make very good grades all during his training through South Arkansas Community College. He actually took his training on the SEABEC campus as there was an overflow of students from South Ark. He drove many miles every week to be in class and to be on time for all clinical rotations. The supportive services WIA provided helped him tremendously. He knew he would have gas money to help him get to school and back daily.

Being a single father, he had to overcome several challenges to make sure his daughter was taken care of while he was at school. In his life she is number one, and he made sure she had everything she needed. He is very caring and responsible, which is a wonderful thing to see in this day when so many young men are not willing to step up to help their dependent children. He was able to juggle school, stress from studies, and being a single father with a home and all the duties

that commands. Joshua said he made sure his daughter studied with him in the evenings so they still spent quality time together. His daughter is a very well rounded and stable young lady who loves her Dad and is so proud of his accomplishments. She wants to be just like him when she grows up. He is instilling in her the mindset to achieve your dreams and be the very best you can be. This is his philosophy and he makes sure he lives it out each day.

He is now the Millcreek Site Nurse in Fordyce, Arkansas, which is a dream come true. He plans to stay there until he completes the RN training. When he entered the program he was not employed and now has a job he is proud of, making about \$15 an hour. Millcreek is very supportive and is willing to work with Josh so he can attend RN classes and complete his long term goal. Joshua has been delightful to case manage as he has always been so cooperative and helpful in every area of his time with WIA.

FRED MCRAE

When Fred first came to the office to inquire about truck driving school, he was a very shy and reserved young man. He really wanted to go to school to learn to safely drive an 18 wheeler rig. He said he wanted to do this since he was a small child. He has been around big trucks all his life, but never had the opportunity to be trained properly to drive one.

Fred comes from a family who is familiar with the WIA program. His sister was a client on the youth program several years ago. He took the ABLE assessment and Ark Oscar. He scored very well on the ABLE and showed Truck Driving as a good match on the interest profiler on Ark Oscar. Upon approval, he took the TABE assessment from Adult Ed and passed it first time above 9th grade rating in both Math and Reading. He took the Career Scope assessment and again showed high interest in Commercial Truck Driving.

WIA staff called the school to check on his progress after about a week, and the people there were giving him highest marks for being cooperative and learning quickly. He was a favorite in his class at CI Truck Driver Training in North Little Rock. He received high marks in his classroom work and received a Commercial Truck Driving License. He was recruited by SWIFT Trucking Co. right after graduation. He went to West Memphis for Orientation and was then given a route. He drives all over the United States and each time we talk he is so grateful to this program for helping him realize his lifelong dream. This story is a great example of what a young man, who had no training and no hopes of having a career, can achieve with determination and the help of WIA. He has a bright and secure future for his family, having recently completed probation and receiving a raise.

BENJAMIN SHERMAN

Benjamin Sherman came by the Arkansas Workforce Center in Arkadelphia in December 2011 to pick up an application for the Youth YES program. Benjamin was 20 years old and had dropped out of school in the 8th grade. Benjamin was basic skills deficient in math and language. Benjamin moved from Arkadelphia to Hot Springs and continued to work on obtaining his GED. Benjamin attended monthly leadership development workshops to help increase his employability skills. Benjamin obtained his GED in February 2012. Benjamin was placed in work experience at Trader Bills Outdoor Sports, Inc. Right away Benjamin did very well at Trader Bills. Benjamin increased his functioning level in math and language and completed his work experience with the program. He was hired at Trader Bills as a full time employee. Benjamin is doing very well at Trader Bills. Not only did Benjamin find fulltime employment, he obtained his GED and is now attending college.

MYLITA WLAKER

When Mylita Walker applied for the WIA Adult Program through WAEDA in 2010, she was getting ready to start her second semester in LPN training but was unsure whether she could continue due to her financial situation. She was married with three children, and her husband was working but they were struggling just to get by and meet their basic needs. She was thankful that they were able to receive food stamps, which helped some, but the stress and constant fear was always there. She wanted to earn a degree and help her husband make a better living so they could be self sufficient and provide their children with a stable home life.

Mylita completed her LPN training in May 2012, with an associate of applied science in allied health. She has just passed her Arkansas State Boards and is working at Paris Health and Rehabilitation earning 16.60 per hour as a LPN.

ASHLEY KNITTIG

Ashley Knittig was a single parent with a six-year-old daughter when she applied for the WIA Adult Program. She was working full-time at a fast food restaurant and doing whatever she could to make ends meet. She had already started classes at Rich Mountain Community College in Mena and had been able to work her way through two semesters using her Pell Grant and student loans. Her grades were solid and her GPA was 3.23. With the fruits of her hard work feeding her confidence, she was determined to continue her education and make whatever sacrifices necessary to earn her Registered Nurse Associate Degree. In order to do that she would have to transfer to another school that offered the program. She knew with a more demanding program, and the travel time involved in a commute, she would not be able to work full time anymore. That reality meant the cost of her dream was out of her reach. This did not discourage her for long.

She learned about the WIA Adult Program from her counselors at RMCC and, with only two semesters left to reach her goal, she was enrolled in the RN program at Carl Albert State College. She worked hard keeping her grades up and was able to successfully complete the program in May, 2012. Ashley was prepared to “do what it takes” to succeed, even when that meant missing out on special events with her young daughter because she was studying or commuting to classes. She said it was very hard, but she knew it would all be worth it in the end.

Ashley graduated from the RN program, passed her state board exams, and was hired by the Mena Regional Hospital. She is earning \$22.71 per hour as a Registered Nurse and was married during Christmas break this year. Ashley is happy to report that her dreams have come true.

MIRANDA BURLISON

Miranda Burlison is a single parent of one child. When she applied for the WIA Adult Program through WAEDA, she was getting ready to start her second semester of LPN training. She was receiving food stamps and surviving on her student loan and Pell grant. She was struggling to stay afloat and felt that she could not afford to stay in school and support her family - she was worried she would have to drop out.

After counseling with a case manager at WAEDA, Miranda was enrolled on the WIA Adult program in January of 2011. With the financial assistance she received, she was able to begin her second semester of LPN training. She worked hard at her studies and caring for her daughter. She had to repeat one class from her last semester because she was three points short of passing. She successfully repeated that class and completed her Associate of Applied Science degree in Nursing in May 2012. She passed her state boards in August 2012, and started working at El Direct in Fort Smith as a Nurse's Aide and feels she will be hired as a

LPN as soon as a position is opened up. She is grateful for the help she received and she is excited to start this new chapter in her life.

MARY CASTSTEEL

Mary Caststeel came into the Workforce Center to apply for WIA assistance to return to school for nursing. Mary had worked in the customer service industry as a CNA, and she always served her customers with respect and a smile. Her husband had a stroke and needed daily care and she had a teenage daughter. Mary began to think about both her and her family's future and what kind of example she was setting for her daughter. While working as a CNA she realized she enjoyed working in healthcare and made the decision to advance her career by becoming a nurse.

After working as a CNA for a year Mary applied to the night/Saturday LPN program at ASU-Mountain Home and her employer agreed to work with her new schedule. Mary thought she would attend classes a couple of nights a week and Saturday while working part time as a CNA. She had in-home care for her husband while working and in school. She was confident she could handle it, no problem. Mary found out fast that those couple of nights turned out to be every night studying, preparing for her classes. She sacrificed time with her family, relying more on her daughter and outside care to assist her husband. Mary's employer didn't like one of their best CNA's not working fulltime and tried to have her choose either work or training, but Mary stuck it out until graduation. She now enjoys working at a local clinic as a licensed nurse. Though her husband still receives in home care while she is at work, Mary is able to donate more time to his care without having to study. She has proved to her daughter that if you stick with your dream no matter how many obstacles are thrown at you, you can succeed.